



Lesson 12

Abraham and Lot

Introduction

In our last lesson we saw how an aged Abraham learned to trust God absolutely in his life. He recognised that the only way he could father a son with Sarah was by the miraculous work of the Lord in their lives and he was circumcised as a sign of total submission to God.

The next two chapters in Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, draw a contrast between Abraham and Lot. Lot was a nephew of Abraham. He had travelled from Ur to Canaan with him but their herdsmen had quarrelled and Lot left Abraham to go and live in Sodom.

Angels appear to Abraham

In chapter 18 we read of three men who arrived at Abraham's tent one day. Abraham and Sarah believed that they were ordinary visitors and she cooked them a meal. However we read in verse 1 that '*the Lord appeared to Abraham*' and we see that these 'men' were angels sent from God with a message - Sarah would bear Abraham a son next year.

This is the same message that we saw in chapter 17, then Abraham had believed it but it seems that Sarah found it difficult to believe God.

"So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"
Genesis 18:12

Although these were her thoughts and she did not speak the words, the angel knew what was in her mind and said:

"Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."
Genesis 18:13-14

God knew what was in Sarah's heart and He knows what is in ours. Although we can mislead other people, perhaps saying one thing whilst we think something else in our heart, we can never do this with God. It is impossible to keep a secret from Him and to pretend to be something we are not. Only absolute honesty will work in our prayers to God as king Solomon knew.

"Hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind."
2 Chronicles 6:30

The angels departed and began to journey to Sodom and through them God revealed to Abraham that He intended to punish the city for its great wickedness.

Abraham bargains with God

This section begins in verse 17 with God speaking to the angels.

"The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do," Genesis 18:17

There is a principle here that we find throughout the Bible. God wants to share His purpose with people who are interested in Him and His word and when we turn to the New Testament, we find the Lord Jesus Christ behaving in the same way as his Father.

"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you."
John 15:15

This is a great privilege for disciples of the Lord Jesus. Through his life and teaching we can learn everything about God's plan for the earth and the people on it. But we only find this in the pages of the Bible, nowhere



else. If we really believe this then we would read it daily to find out what God plans to do on this earth so we could be part of the future He tells us about.

So the Lord, through His angel, tells Abraham of His purpose with Sodom and Gomorrah. Because of the great wickedness of the people who lived there, He was going to totally destroy it.

Abraham knows that Lot and his family still live in Sodom and he bargains with God. He asks Him if He will not destroy it if there are fifty righteous people in the city. Gradually Abraham negotiates further with God until he has the number down to ten people and then he stops. Clearly Abraham is worried about Lot and his family and believes that they will now be safe. He thinks that surely there must be at least ten righteous people there and so God will not destroy the city. However, we shall see that this was not the case; Abraham's intervention could not save the city and all of Lot's family.

Abraham was perhaps unaware of God's teaching about bargaining in this way.

"No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him, the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough."
Psalm 49:7-8

We have to preach the good news of the Gospel message to other men and women and hope and pray that they will accept it. But it is their responsibility alone to make their individual decision.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

In chapter 19 we read the terrible record of the destruction of the cities. Two of the three angels that appeared to Abraham went down to the city to warn Lot and his family to escape before the city fell. The men of the city tried to assault the angels but were stopped by God's power. Some of Lot's family listened to the angel's warning but others laughed and did not believe.



Only Lot, his wife and two of his daughters left but his wife looked back and was killed, turned into a pillar of salt.

Notice in 19:15 that there was a great hurry. God's judgments were coming and unless Lot left quickly he too would die.

The Apostle Peter wrote about Lot. He said that he was distressed every day by the wickedness of Sodom. But Lot continued to live there because it was a place where he became rich. When God's judgments came he escaped with his life but he lost everything else, his wealth, his wife and some of his family.

The Return of Jesus to the Earth

What a great lesson this is for us. If we put success in this life before our discipleship, we may lose everything when the Lord Jesus returns to judge the earth. In Luke 17 Jesus tells us that the time just before he returns will be like the days of Lot. Just as Lot was given one opportunity to escape, so Jesus says, we will have one opportunity to respond to the call of the angel and go immediately to be with the Lord. If we don't do this, we shall be lost, just as some of Lot's family were lost.

SUMMARY

In this lesson we have learned the following key points.

- God shared with Abraham His plans for the future. God also tells us about these plans in the Bible.
- Everyone has to respond individually to the Gospel, it is our personal responsibility.
- We should not put the things of this life before our discipleship otherwise we might lose a place in God's kingdom when Jesus returns.
- The record about Lot in Sodom is used by Jesus to warn us of what will happen when he returns.

